

SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) analyzes the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, referred to as the Citywide Agriculture Preservation Program and Southeast Quadrant (SEQ) Land Use Plan (Project). The SEQ Area includes approximately 1,290 acres of land, plus 48 acres of public roadways. The 1,290 acres of private land are currently developed with residential and agricultural uses. A key goal of the project is to encourage the preservation and enhancement of agriculture while also identifying certain properties for compatible development with sports, recreation, and leisure uses. As such, the project would result in development of a portion of the SEQ Area, while ensuring that agricultural activity is maintained and permanently preserved in the SEQ Area and citywide.

The proposed Citywide Agriculture Preservation Program and Southeast Quadrant Land Use Plan consists of five program-level components (collectively referred to as the SEQ Area Project), and one project-level component. The project-level component, a proposed high school, would be located within the SEQ Area Project boundary. The following is a list of all project components:

- 1) Agricultural Lands Preservation Program – The establishment of a citywide program to support the permanent preservation of open space/agriculture. The program would set forth mitigation to address the conversion of agricultural lands within the City limits and identifies policies and procedures for preserving viable agricultural lands and creating a greenbelt along the southern edge of the City’s sphere of influence boundary.
- 2) Boundary Adjustments – Adjust the City limits (i.e., annexation), urban service area, urban growth boundary, and urban limit line.
- 3) Sports-Recreation-Leisure General Plan and Zoning Code Amendment – Establishment of a new Sports-Recreation-Leisure land use designation in the General Plan and Sports-Recreation-Leisure Zoning District in the Zoning Code.
- 4) City General Plan Amendments and Zoning Amendments to amend the land use designations and prezone lands within the SEQ Area, and adopt text amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance for project consistency.
- 5) Programmatic Project Applications – Four projects are evaluated at a programmatic level of detail. Project-level CEQA review will occur if and when detailed development or land use proposals are submitted for discretionary approval.
- 6) South County Catholic High School – A 1,600-student private high school on approximately 38 acres is evaluated at a project-level in this Draft EIR.

Project Description

This Draft EIR provides programmatic-level analysis of the SEQ Area and project-level analysis of the proposed High School. As defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a program-level analysis is appropriate when sufficient details are not available that would allow a project-level analysis. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, a program-level analysis may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either geographically or as a logical part in a chain of contemplated actions.

From a practical standpoint, the High School project is evaluated at a project level of detail and should not require further review under CEQA. This Draft EIR also includes analysis of the effects of the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program, boundary adjustments, Zoning Code amendments, and General Plan amendments; no further environmental review is required for City adoption and implementation of Project Components 1 through 4. Component 5—the four programmatic project applications—will require further environmental review, once project level details are made available.

This section provides background and setting information for the proposed project, describes the proposed project and its related components, and lists the government actions required for completion and approval of the project.

2.1 - Project Location and Setting

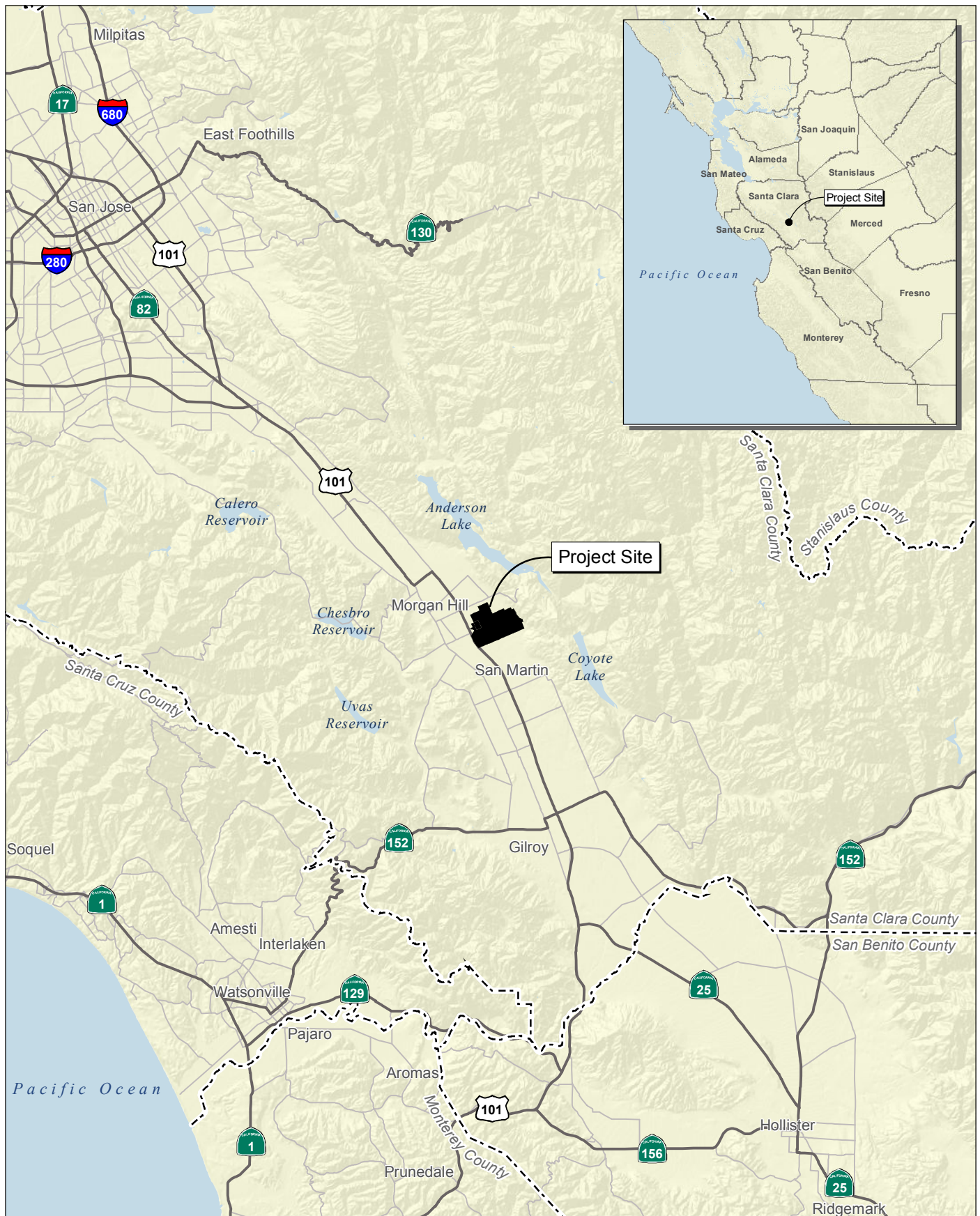
2.1.1 - Project Location

SEQ Area

The SEQ Area is located immediately southeast of the City of Morgan Hill, along the southeastern city limit boundary. Morgan Hill is located approximately 10 miles south of the City of San Jose in southern Santa Clara County, California, within the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area region (Exhibit 2-1). The approximately 1,290-acre SEQ Area is bounded by Condit Road and Highway 101 to the west, San Pedro Avenue to the north, Carey Avenue to the east, and Maple Avenue to the south (Exhibit 2-2). The project site is located on portions of the Morgan Hill, Mount Sizer, Mount Madonna, and Gilroy, California, United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangles, Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Sections 23, 25, 26, and 35, Latitude 37° 07' 00" North, Longitude 121° 37' 00" West.

High School Site

The proposed South County Catholic High School (High School) site is located in unincorporated Santa Clara County, within the western portion of the SEQ Area (Exhibit 2-2). The High School site is also located within the City of Morgan Hill's Sphere of Influence.



Source: Census 2000 Data, The CaSIL, MBA GIS 2011.



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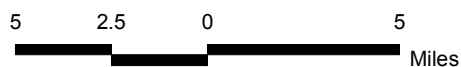
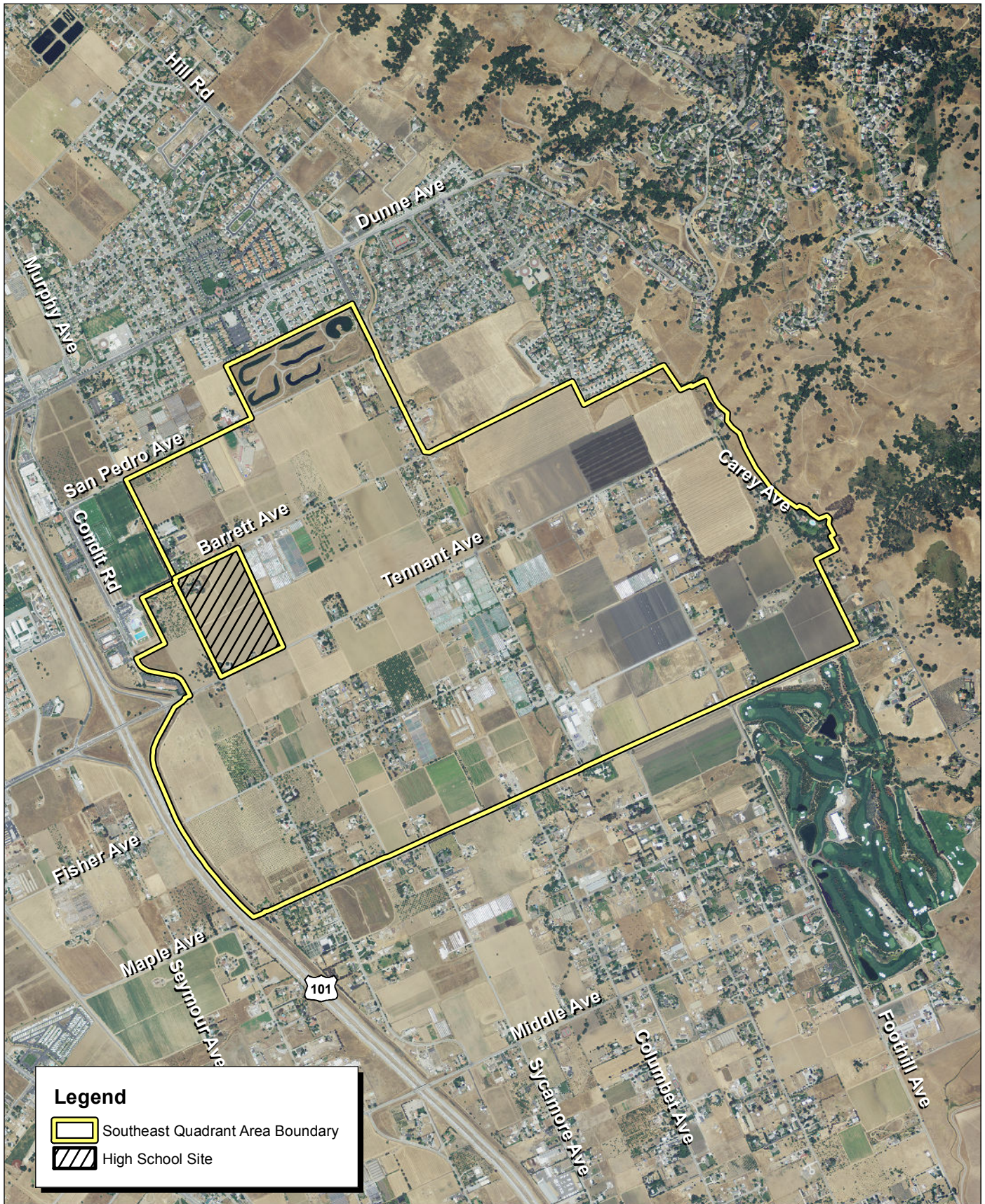


Exhibit 2-1 Regional Location Map

CITY OF MORGAN HILL
CITYWIDE AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION PROGRAM AND SOUTHEAST QUADRANT LAND USE PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT



Source: NAIP Santa Clara County, CA (2009)



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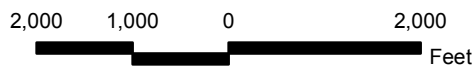


Exhibit 2-2 Local Vicinity Map Aerial Base

The 38-acre High School site is bounded by Tennant Avenue on the south, Murphy Avenue on the west, and Barrett Avenue on the north, and consists of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 817-17-001, 817-17-025, and 817-17-026. The project site is located on portions of the Mount Sizer, and Gilroy, California, United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangles.

2.1.2 - Existing Site Conditions

SEQ Area

Physical Conditions

The SEQ Area is generally flat and characterized by rural residences, agricultural lands, farms, and orchards. The majority of the parcels in the SEQ are 10 acres or less; of these, approximately half are 5 acres or less. Structures generally consist of single-family residences or agricultural-related buildings (barns, sheds, etc.). A network of two-lane roads crosses through the project area at various locations. Photographs of the SEQ Area are provided in Exhibit 2-3a through Exhibit 2-3d.

The SEQ Area is mapped as containing approximately 597.63 acres of "Prime Farmland," 87.00 acres of "Farmland of Statewide Importance," 23.03 acres of "Unique Farmland," and 63.34 acres of Farmland of Local Importance. The first three farmland classifications fall under the "Important Farmland" umbrella as classified by the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. A total of 91.65 acres within the SEQ Area are encumbered by Williamson Act contracts (Refer to Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources for further discussion).

Boundaries and Land Use Designations

Several boundary lines would be adjusted as part of the project, as discussed below. Exhibit 2-4 shows the existing boundaries.

The Morgan Hill General Plan establishes an **Urban Service Area (USA)**, which signifies land expected to be converted to planned City land uses within 5 years and served with city water and sewer services. All of the SEQ Area is outside of the existing USA.

The Morgan Hill General Plan also establishes an **Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)**, which differentiates land within the sphere of influence intended for future urbanization from land intended to remain rural and unincorporated for the next 20 years. Approximately 79 acres of the SEQ are within the UGB.

The **Urban Limit Line (ULL)** was established as part of the Urban Limit Line/Greenbelt Study. The ULL defines the ultimate limits of city urbanization beyond the 20-year timeframe of the UGB. Some, but not all, of the land outside the existing ULL has been identified as "Greenbelt" areas. Currently there is a gap in the ULL boundary within the SEQ Area. One of the main objectives of the SEQ Area Project is to close the gap in the ULL boundary.

Project Description

A **Sphere of Influence** (SOI) is defined as a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the applicable Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) (Government Code Section 56076). Note that no changes are proposed to the Morgan Hill SOI boundary as part of the SEQ Area Project.

The SEQ Area is located in unincorporated Santa Clara County, with the exception of a 23-acre narrow strip of land in the eastern portion of the SEQ Area. The Morgan Hill General Plan identifies land use designations for land within the City’s SOI, including lands that are currently outside the city limits. The City’s General Plan identifies the SEQ Area as Rural County and Open Space. Table 2-1 shows the acreages of Open Space and Rural County-designated land within the SEQ Area. The existing Morgan Hill General Plan land use designations are shown on Exhibit 2-5.

Table 2-1: Existing Morgan Hill Land Use Designations and Acreages

Land Use Category	Acreage*	Percent of SEQ Area
Open Space	97	7.5
Rural County	1,193	92.5
Total All Land Uses	1,290	100.0
Note: * All acreages are approximate. • The SEQ Area also includes approximately 48 acres of public roadways, for a total of 1,338 acres. Source: City of Morgan Hill, 2011.		

The Santa Clara County General Plan designates the majority of the SEQ Area as Agriculture Medium Scale, which requires a minimum parcel area of no less than 20 acres, and allows agriculture, ancillary agricultural uses, and land uses necessary to directly support local agriculture. (Note that most of the parcels within the SEQ are less than 10 acres in area and, thus, do not conform to the County’s parcel-size standard). The designation also allows other uses that are compatible with agriculture that “clearly enhance the long term viability” of local agriculture and agricultural lands. The balance of the SEQ is designated Hillsides by the Santa Clara County General Plan. Under the existing Santa Clara County land use designations, both the Agriculture Medium Scale and Hillsides designations allow rural residential development. County land use designations are shown on Exhibit 2-6.

The County of Santa Clara Zoning Atlas designates the majority of the SEQ Area’s zoning as Exclusive Agriculture (A-20) and the balance as Hillside (HS). Both the Exclusive Agriculture (A-20) and Hillside (HS) zoning districts allow agriculture and rural residential development.

City zoning classifications only apply to the 23-acre narrow portion of the SEQ Area currently within the Morgan Hill city limits. Existing city and county zoning classifications are shown on Exhibit 2-7.



Source: NAIP Santa Clara County, CA (2009)



Photograph 1: View of Southeast Quadrant Area looking south from Barrett Avenue.



Photograph 2: View of Southeast Quadrant Area looking south from San Pedro Avenue.



Photograph 3: View of Southeast Quadrant Area Looking West from Hill Road with El Toro Hill in the background.



Photograph 4: View of Southeast Quadrant Area with Santa Cruz Mountains in the background.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2011.



Michael Brandman Associates

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Exhibit 2-3b Site Photographs (1-4)

CITY OF MORGAN HILL
CITYWIDE AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION PROGRAM AND SOUTHEAST QUADRANT LAND USE PLAN
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